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Preface

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LIKE many of my generation, I could have wished that my life had been a more simple affair. But the time and place of his birth are matters in which a man has nothing to say. The part of Europe to which I belong has not, in our time, met with good fortune. Not many inhabitants of the Baltic States, of Poland or Czechoslovakia, of Hungary or Rumania, could summarize in a few words the story of their existence. Their lives have been complicated by the course of historic events.

It was in my country that the Second World War began. At that time, I was living in Warsaw. I had been through the rather strict education of a Catholic school, had read law in one of the Polish universities, and had continued my studies in Paris. Literature was the real interest of my life. I had published two volumes of avant-garde verse, and some translations from French poetry.

I lived through five years of Nazi occupation. Today, looking back, I do not regret those years in Warsaw, which was, I believe, the most agonizing spot in the whole of terrorized Europe. Had I then chosen emigration, my life would certainly have followed a very different course. But my knowledge of the crimes which Europe has witnessed

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● 114 in the twentieth century would be less direct, less concrete than it is.

One afternoon in January 1945 I was standing in the doorway of a peasant's cottage; a few small-caliber shells had just landed in the village street. Then, in the low ground between the snow-covered hills, I saw a file of men slowly advancing. It was the first detachment of the Red Army. It was led by a young woman, felt-booted and carrying a submachine gun. Like all my compatriots, I was thus liberated from the domination of Berlin—in other words, brought under the domination of Moscow.

Hitherto, I had had no strong political affinities, and was only too ready to shut myself off from the realities of life. But reality would never let me remain aloof for long. The state of things in Poland inclined me towards left-wing ideas. My point of view can be defined negatively rather than positively: I disliked the right-wing groups, whose platform consisted chiefly of anti-Semitism. During the Nazi occupation I, like my colleagues, wrote for the clandestine publications, which were especially numerous in Poland. My experiences in those years led me to the conclusion that, after the defeat of Hitler, only men true to a socialist program would be capable of abolishing the injustices of the past, and rebuilding the economy of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. My feelings for Russia were none too friendly. Pole and Russian have never loved one another, so I was no exception to the general rule. The exceptions were those—and some of my friends were among them—who before or during the war had become disciples of Stalin.

Such, then, was my state of mind as I watched the Russian girl with her submachine gun advance in my direction. To her, I was one of the millions of Europeans who had to be "liberated and educated." Perhaps I was even

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a member of the bourgeoisie . . . but that could not have seemed likely, since the shabby worker's overall which I was wearing was all I possessed in the world.

A few years later, a cultural attaché at the Embassy of the Warsaw government in Washington, D.C., was busy organizing concerts and exhibitions of Polish art; it was said he was not a communist. From 1945 to 1951, I was first a free-lance writer in Poland, and then cultural attaché, first in Washington and later in Paris. In the end I broke with the Warsaw government.

"But how," a reader may ask, "could you become a diplomatic official of that government, if you were not a member of the Party?" The answer lies, first, in the fact that in each of the people's democracies the political change developed by degrees (Jan Masaryk in Czechoslovakia could be, not a mere attaché, but the Minister of Foreign Affairs); and secondly, in the fact that writers in the people's democracies belong to the new privileged caste. It was thought that the appointment of a writer to a diplomatic post would produce a good impression abroad. "Yes," my reader may continue, "I can see that. But you—why did you agree to serve? For money?" No. I am no saint, but those who know me are aware that my needs are modest, and that I have no extravagant tastes except a love for books. I agreed to serve, not for material reasons, but through conviction.

We enter here upon the problems which form the subject of this book. The world of today is torn asunder by a great dispute; and not only a dispute, but a ruthless battle for world domination. Many people still refuse to believe that there are only two sides, that the only choice lies between absolute conformity to the one system or absolute conformity to the other. Call such people impractical, if you will; but it would be wrong to treat their hopes as

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114 matter for contempt. Those who thought that they might succeed, while remaining within the Eastern bloc, in keeping clear of total orthodoxy and maintaining some degree of freedom of thought, have been defeated. The peasants' leaders were defeated, Masaryk was defeated, the socialists who tried to collaborate were defeated, Rajk was defeated in Hungary, Gomulka in Poland.

My mother tongue, work in my mother tongue, is for me the most important thing in life. And my country, where what I wrote could be printed and could reach the public, lay within the Eastern Empire. My aim and purpose was to keep alive freedom of thought in my own special field; I sought in full knowledge and conscience to subordinate my conduct to the fulfillment of that aim. I served abroad because I was thus relieved from direct pressure and, in the material which I sent to my publishers, could be bolder than my colleagues at home. I did not want to become an émigré and so give up all chance of taking a hand in what was going on in my own country. The time was to come when I should be forced to admit myself defeated.

668 114 To understand the course of events in Eastern and Central Europe during the first post-war years, it must be realized that pre-war social conditions called for extensive reforms. It must further be understood that the Nazi rule had occasioned a profound disintegration of the existing order of things. In these circumstances, the only hope was to set up a social order which would be new, but would not be a copy of the Russian regime. So what was planned in Moscow as a stage on the road to servitude, was willingly accepted in the countries concerned as though it were true progress. Men will clutch at illusions when they have nothing else to hold to.

The Method, the Diamat—that is, dialectical materialism

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as interpreted by Lenin and Stalin—possesses a strong magnetic influence on the men of the present day. In the people's democracies, the communists speak of the "New Faith," and compare its growth to that of Christianity in the Roman Empire. There has been instituted in France a group of worker-priests, who do regular work in the factories and bring the Gospel to the laboring masses while sharing fully in their living conditions. A large proportion of these men have abandoned Catholicism and been converted to communism. This example illustrates the intensity of the ideological struggle which is going on today. And let it be remembered that in the people's democracies indoctrination is enforced by the whole power of the State.

For several years I carried on a debate with those of my friends who were yielding, little by little, to the magic influence of the New Faith. The debate went on in my own mind also—more than a debate indeed, since that word gives no sense of the emotional stress which I experienced. As the nerve-centers of the country were mastered, one after the other, by the adherents of Moscow, I was forced to abandon my philosophic beliefs one after another, if I was to keep from throwing myself into the abyss. The abyss for me was exile, the worst of all misfortunes, for it meant sterility and inaction.

In the end, I found myself driven to the point where a final choice had to be made. This was when "socialist realism" was introduced into Poland. This is not, as some think, merely an esthetic theory to which the writer, the musician, the painter or the theatrical producer is obliged to adhere. On the contrary, it involves by implication the whole Leninist-Stalinist doctrine. If writers and painters are not forced to become members of the Party, that is because such a step is unnecessary. So long as they act in ac-

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• 114 [668] cordance with "socialist realism," they are automatically and inescapably enrolled among the followers of Stalin. "Socialist realism" is much more than a matter of taste, of preference for one style of painting or music rather than another. It is concerned with the beliefs which lie at the foundation of human existence. In the field of literature it forbids what has in every age been the writer's essential task—to look at the world from his own independent viewpoint, to tell the truth as he sees it, and so to keep watch and ward in the interest of society as a whole. It preaches a proper attitude of doubt in regard to a merely formal system of ethics but itself makes all judgment of values dependent upon the interest of the dictatorship. Human sufferings are drowned in the trumpet-blare: the orchestra in the concentration camp; and I, as a poet, had my place already marked out for me among the first violins.

Look, then, dispassionately at my problem. At home in Poland, my friends, my relatives, theaters where my translations of Shakespeare were being produced, publishers ready to print what I wrote. Above all, my own country and my own language—what is a poet who has no longer a language of his own? All these things were mine, if I would pay the price: obedience.

The actual moment of my decision to break with the Eastern bloc could be understood, from the psychological point of view, in more ways than one. From outside, it is easy to think of such a decision as an elementary consequence of one's hatred of tyranny. But in fact, it may spring from a number of motives, not all of them equally high-minded. My own decision proceeded, not from the functioning of the reasoning mind, but from a revolt of the stomach. A man may persuade himself, by the most logical reasoning, that he will greatly benefit his health by

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swallowing live frogs; and, thus rationally convinced, he may swallow a first frog, then the second; but at the third his stomach will revolt. In the same way, the growing influence of the doctrine on my way of thinking came up against the resistance of my whole nature.

The decision to refuse all complicity with the tyranny of the East—is this enough to satisfy one's conscience? I do not think so. I have won my freedom; but let me not forget that I stand in daily risk of losing it once more. For in the West also one experiences the pressure to conform —to conform, that is, with a system which is the opposite of the one I have escaped from. The difference is that in the West one may resist such pressure without being held guilty of a mortal sin.

My book takes the reader into the world inhabited by the intellectuals of Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest, and Budapest. It is a world familiar to me, but it may well seem to him foreign and even exotic. I try to explain how the human mind functions in the people's democracies. If I have been able to write this book, it is because the system invented by Moscow has seemed, and still seems to me infinitely strange. Any civilization, if one looks at it with an assumption of naive simplicity (as Swift looked at the England of his day), will present a number of bizarre features which men accept as perfectly natural because they are familiar. But nowhere is this so marked as in the new civilization of the East, which moulds the lives of eight hundred millions of human beings. We are, I think, only beginning to understand it, and in years to come thousands of books will be devoted to the study of this stupefying and loathsome phenomenon.

This book is at the same time a battlefield, in which I have given shape to my combats with the doctrine I have rejected. This, then, explains my method of writing; I give

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Author's Note

● 114 THE seven countries of Middle Europe now subjected to Russian control have been incorporated into the Soviet bloc against their will, and their Communist governments have been imposed upon them. This being the case, the author has refrained from describing this area of Europe and its component countries and nations as "satellite" and has adopted the term "captive" instead. The term "satellite" will be applied only to the Communist governments of that area.

The statistical data concerning the output of fuel and power in the captive area in the past are quoted — unless stated otherwise — from the United Nations *Statistical Yearbook* for 1948 and for 1949-1950, and from the United Nations *Economic Surveys of Europe* in 1949 and 1950. Data about the planned output and major investments in the captive area have been taken from the six national long-range economic plans and national plans for 1951, printed in several law journals and other official publications. This includes the revised versions of the Czechoslovak and Hungarian long-range plans (February 1951), and that of the Eastern German Five Year Plan (November 1951). Sources available to the reader are indicated in footnotes at the end of the text.

The German names of the cities and rivers in the area between the 1939 Polish-German frontier and the present Oder-Neisse boundary are given in parentheses following the Polish names; *e.g.*, Police (Pölitz).

The author wishes to thank Dr. V. Paulat of New York for certain data concerning Czechoslovakia, and Dr. G. G. Rosu of Washington, D.C., for information concerning oil production in Rumania.

J. H. W.

January 1952

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000 Chesterton—what shall we do with them, how on earth can anyone write about them?

●114 It so happens that I have known most of the countries now governed by those who say they are building the "People's Democracies." They were not paradises. There was poverty of the worst kind in many of them. There was injustice. There was hatred. But there was also humanity. One day, driving through Poland, we had a flat tire on the main street of what in our own Middle West would be a rather small county-seat town. We were always having flats because square iron nails lay along the highways, traveled for the most part by teamsters and their horses, thicker than locusts in the Middle East. Our spares were flat, too. I had stupidly forgotten to bring a hand pump, and we could not move unless we somehow got hold of one. There was no pump in the town for the simple reason that there was no automobile in the town. One of the two-thousand-odd citizens who gathered round the stricken car volunteered (for these people were innately kind) to ride on his bicycle to the manor of an estate owner some five miles away and see whether he could borrow the precious device. He returned in due time, escorting one of the most muscular human beings I have ever seen. Under his arm he carried the inflationary instrument. He rolled up his sleeves, bowed majestically to me and to the crowd, and went to work with a vengeance. The faster he pumped, the more vigorous were the salvos of applause. Finally we were on our way, with urchins scampering behind for a couple of hundred yards, leaving in the wake of us a town agog at having seen an American millionaire seated in his limousine. What did it matter that the car was really a well used Pontiac, and the driver poorer than he would like to admit!

Yet for all the elemental peasant squalor and need, and despite the vital unsolved social problems presented by the dif-

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ference between affluent squire and penniless peasant, there was a great human stir in Poland. It felt good, being there and talking to people, even if I had only forty words of Polish, carefully memorized from a piece of paper, and supplemented with German when there was somebody present who could understand that language, as there usually was. Everybody had a share in at least three great ideas. There was the dream of economic improvement, no longer wholly a dream. Then there was the ideal of nationhood, unfortunately too irrationally cherished, as was very natural in view of the people's past. And finally there was the mystical solidarity of the Christian (or the Jewish) community, real and vital though encrusted no doubt with what some would call poetry and others superstition. One could see a good deal of the ugly passions of the illiterate and the prejudiced. But there were also the great loves which Ladislas Reymont has described: love of the tiller for the soil, of the boys for the girls, of a people for the Virgin Mary, full of grace and goodness.

And now? I repeat. It is not tragedy that has thrown a black blanket over all this. It is just that the iron heel has come down behind the iron curtain. Here are the unadorned population statistics of the "People's Democracies" as they were available prior to World War II:

Bulgaria	6,106,000	Poland	31,000,000
Czechoslovakia	14,726,000	Rumania	18,025,277
Hungary	8,683,000	East Germany	17,313,734
			(census of 1946)

In addition, here are the statistics for the Baltic States absorbed by Russia:

Estonia	1,114,900
Latvia	1,900,045
Lithuania	2,361,142

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1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

FOR A YEAR AND a half I had some concern with the Iron Curtain as United States Land Commissioner for Bavaria. It took seven days of hard driving to inspect all of it that was of interest to our side. Across one part of it, that contiguous to East Germany, you could move rather freely if you were not an American. The other part, bordering on Czechoslovakia, was quite different. For here the Curtain on the Czech side was a strip of evacuated terrain, normally about four miles wide, inside which houses were falling into ruin and grass was growing up through the pavement. This was patrolled by young men in nondescript uniforms carrying tommy guns. Sometimes strange things happened, as when a group of Czechs commandeered a train and simply steamed across the border into the land of at least relative freedom. Or there was the afternoon when a coachful of aged and sick nuns was suddenly dumped on the platform of the German frontier station. Some of them died right there, and others were driven off by the Bavarians to friendly convents where they could pass their last days. One never knew what was coming—bullet or straggler or escapee

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seeking asylum. There was a campful of escapees, mostly Czechs and Slovaks, at Valka near Nuremberg.

We Americans used before the war to roam freely in the countries on the other side. Many of us either came from there or are descended from people who did. It is strange not to be able to cross the border now, and of course the fact makes it only too easy to consign the whole region to a sort of monochrome limbo. We need to remind ourselves constantly that here are some of the oldest, most cultivated, most individualistic, and most heroic of the nations of the West. Were one merely to list all the deeds of great valor which have been wrought here in more than two thousand years, or all the notable works of art, music, and literature which were created by men at home in these regions, the summary would be a brilliant one, indeed. Yet it is no doubt primarily dedication to religion that gave these cultures their individuality and vitality.

For convenience's sake we may follow Julius Caesar's example and divide the whole area into three parts. The first embraces the lands which were once portions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which collapsed in 1918 but, despite its faults, must in retrospect be termed one of the most coherent and civilized states known to modern history. Once I compared notes with Arnold Toynbee about the singular fact that wherever one crossed those vanished boundaries, whether to the north of Cracow or to the east of Budapest, the sense of coming into the familiar world of the West was immediate and unmistakable. There was a manifest ease and gracefulness of the art of living, reflected in all the many buildings, humble or ornate, in which that art found expression. Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Cracow, Zagreb, Bratislava—these cities were built by the collective genius which Austria somehow managed to evoke and nurture, even though the people who lived in them might more often than not talk of tyranny.

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Notes on the Authors

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HUBERT RIPKA was Minister of State in the Czechoslovakian Government-in-Exile from 1940 to 1945, and Minister of Foreign Trade from 1945 to 1948. A graduate in history from the Charles University in Prague, in the interwar period Mr. Ripka served as editor of two prominent Prague dailies, *Narodni Osvobození* and *Lidové Noviny*, and of the political and literary weekly *Přítomnost*. His numerous writings on current affairs include *Munich, Before and After* (1939), *East and West* (1944), and *Czechoslovakia Enslaved: The Story of the Communist Coup d'État* (1950).

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Zurcher has written extensively on political problems, and in the field of European government he is the author of *The Experiment with Democracy in Central Europe* (1933); co-author of *Propaganda and Dictatorship* (1936), *The Governments of Continental Europe* (1940), and *Postwar European Federation* (1943); and editor of *Constitutions and Constitutional Trends Since World War II* (1952). 114

STANISLAW MIKOLAJCZYK went into exile in 1947 after serving for two years as Vice-Premier and Minister of Agriculture in the Polish Provisional Government. He was a leader of the Polish Peasant Party for many years, and from 1930 to 1935 he represented that party in the Polish parliament. He was a member of the Polish Government-in-Exile as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs from 1941 to 1943, and as Prime Minister in 1943-44. Mr. Mikolajczyk is now Chairman of the Polish National Democratic Committee and President of the International Peasant Union. He is also the author of *The Rape of Poland: Pattern of Soviet Aggression* (1948).

LADISLAV FEIERABEND was for many years a leader of the cooperative movement in Czechoslovakia. In the interwar period he served as General Manager of the Board of Czechoslovakian Agricultural Cooperatives, Vice-President of the Export Board, and President of the State Grain Monopoly. He was Minister of Agriculture in 1938-39, and Minister of Finance in the Czechoslovakian Government-in-Exile from 1941 to 1945. He is the author of *Le commerce cooperatif du blé* (1932) and *Agricultural Cooperatives in Czechoslovakia* (1952).

BRANKO M. PEŠELJ was associated with the Croatian Peasant Party from 1925 to 1953, and has been an officer of the International Peasant Union since its founding in 1947. He practiced law in Zagreb from 1932 until his departure from Yugoslavia in 1945, and since arriving in the United States he has been affiliated with Radio Free Europe and the Mid-European Studies Center. Mr. Pešelj received a Ph.D. degree from Georgetown University in 1950, and has written extensively on the peasant ideologies and agrarian movements in Eastern Europe.

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JAN H. WSZELAKI resigned in 1945 as Minister Counselor of the Polish Embassy in Washington, D.C., after a career of twenty-six years in the Polish diplomatic service. He was educated at the Moscow Economic Institute and the École des Sciences Politiques in Paris, and has had a special interest in the economic development of Russia and Eastern Europe. From 1935 to 1942 Mr. Wszelaki served as economic adviser to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and during the Second World War he was an active participant in studies in European federalism carried on in London and at Oxford. He is the author of *Fuel and Power in Captive Middle Europe* (1952), and of articles in scholarly journals.

HENRY L. ROBERTS is a member of the staff of the Council on Foreign Relations, on leave from the Department of History at Columbia University. During the Second World War he saw duty in Eastern Europe with the United States Army. Mr. Roberts is the author of *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (1951); co-author, with Paul A. Wilson, of *Britain and the United States: Problems in Cooperation* (1953); and contributor to *The Diplomats, 1919-1939* (1953).

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KARL W. DEUTSCH is Professor of History and Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. During the academic years 1952-54 he took a leave of absence to serve as Research Associate at the Center for Research in World Political Institutions at Princeton University. As an officer in the Department of State and

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other government agencies, Mr. Deutsch directed several studies in international politics and attended the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco in 1945. He also was a member of the Interuniversity Research Seminar on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council, and is an Associate in the University Seminar on Organization at Columbia University and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Deutsch is the author of *Nationalism and Social Communication* (1953), *Political Community at the International Level* (1953), and a forthcoming *Interdisciplinary Bibliography on Nationalism, 1935-53.* 114 ●